

REPORT

TO THE

**BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

For the Year 1957



BY

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.
Medical Officer of Health

R E P O R T

TO THE

BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Year 1957

BY

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.
Medical Officer of Health

STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Senior Public Health Inspector :

S. CLOUGH, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector :

J. H. HOSTLER, A.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

MRS. J. FULLERTON - *Clerk/Typist*

OFFICES :

COUNCIL OFFICES, BELLINGHAM

HEXHAM - NORTHUMBERLAND

Telephone - Bellingham 239

*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council
of Bellingham :*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1957.

The social conditions of the District show little change. Indeed it seems unlikely that changes will come quickly in an area such as this with its very large acreage and small population, and almost entirely rural occupations. The growth of the new forests, the establishment of a caravan site near Kielder and the designation of much of the area as a National Park will bring more visitors, but it will not greatly influence the resident population. This population, after a slow rise for a number of years, has shown a small reduction in 1957, and the maintenance of population in the District, rather than increasing the population, is a matter for concern.

Rural problems are intensified where the area is so large and the population so scattered, and the Council have cause for satisfaction in the progress made in improving the amenities. The more urgent improvements having been carried out, progress will now be slower as the needs of the smaller centres of population are more difficult to meet in many ways.

No new houses were built in the area during 1957. The cost of building Council houses is such that tenants would be unwilling to pay the rents required, and there is only a short waiting list for Council tenancies. It is hoped to build at Otterburn when sewage facilities are available, and to build a few houses for old people in Bellingham. The Council are generous in giving improvement grants, and such grants represent money well spent as the older property is brought up to an acceptable standard and remains in use ; if no improvement is undertaken the property will often become unfit for habitation and will not be replaced.

The Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company are the statutory water undertakers and provide mains water extensively throughout the District. The latest extensions have been to Rochester and Kirkwhelpington. There remain more difficult problems where, as at Stannersburn, it is hoped to use a local spring, and smaller groups of houses

where there is no suitable local source and the cost of laying unproductive miles of main is prohibitive when compared with the estimated revenue. There appears to be no means of providing such communities with piped water.

Similar problems arise in sewage disposal. Now that the Birtley sewage disposal works are almost complete and the Otterburn scheme is awaiting Ministry approval, no large schemes remain to be carried out. It is hoped to provide the smaller communities in turn with minor works, but the resignation of the Additional Public Health Inspector at the end of the year, without replacement, has held up progress.

The vital statistics show little change, the birth rate still being higher and the death rate lower than the National average. There were no deaths in infancy. The unfortunate deaths of two boys by drowning, and of two young men in road accidents, are recorded, but the average age at death remains high.

Measles accounted for most of the notifications of infectious disease during 1957, and there were small numbers of cases of whooping cough, scarlet fever and dysentery. Poliomyelitis did not occur and no case of tuberculosis was notified. Preventive measures against these diseases continue.

After two years, the staff is again below establishment, in that Mr. Hostler left at the end of the year to take up a more responsible post in Canada. Though it is not easy at the present time to fill the vacancy, it is necessary to do so if the work of the Department is to be carried out satisfactorily.

In presenting this Report, I have to express appreciation of the encouragement and interest of the Council, and to thank the Clerk and the other officers for their co-operation, and the members of the Health Department for their help.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. M. McEWAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Population

The population of the Rural District, estimated at 30th June, 1957, was 5,330. This is a decrease of 440 on the previous year, after a slow rise for a number of years.

Birth Rate

There were 109 live births during 1957, and when an adjustment factor is applied this gives a birth rate of 22.90 per 1000 population, while the figure for England and Wales is 16.1 per 1000. There was 1 still birth during the year, giving a rate of 8.2 per 1000 total births. The National figure is 22.4 per 1000.

Infant Mortality

There were no deaths of infants under one year. The infant mortality rate for England and Wales is 23.0 per 1000.

Death Rate

A total of 60 deaths occurred during 1957, the same number as in 1956. This gives a crude death rate of 11.25 per 1000 population. The figure for England and Wales is 11.5 per 1000 population.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Measles

There were 108 cases of measles during the year, and the disease was widespread throughout the country.

Erysipelas

One case occurred.

Scarlet Fever

15 cases of scarlet fever occurred, all in the Wark area, where a small outbreak was investigated.

Whooping Cough

14 cases were notified.

Dysentery

There were 8 cases, all in the Kirkwhelpington district.

Tuberculosis, Poliomyelitis, Diphtheria

No case of tuberculosis, poliomyelitis or diphtheria was notified in 1957.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

The area of the Bellingham Rural District is 246,645 acres.

The estimated population for 1957 is 5,330.

The number of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1957, was 1,672.

The sum represented by a penny rate is £240.

The rateable value is £78,443.

HEALTH SERVICES

Laboratory Facilities

Facilities in the area continue to be provided by the Government Laboratory in Newcastle General Hospital, which gives an efficient service.

Ambulance Service

The local ambulance service is administered for the County Council by the Red Cross, and a satisfactory service is maintained. In addition to the ambulance, a car service is available for suitable cases and is of considerable value in such a large district. Since the passenger train service was discontinued much extra mileage has been run to enable patients to keep hospital appointments and to allow mothers and children to attend clinics.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting

The district nurses are all provided with cars and their nursing work continues to be excellent. In spite of the difficulty of arranging for suitable help in a country district the Home Help Service run by the County Council continues to function satisfactorily. The County Health Visitors work in harmony with the General Practitioners in the area and do much valuable work.

Maternity and Child Welfare

Four Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, staffed by the County Council, operate at Bellingham, Otterburn, Kielder and Wark. Immunisation against diphtheria is carried out at these centres or is done by the General Practitioners, while all vaccination is carried out by the General Practitioners.

TABLE I.

The following table shows the principal statistics for the years 1954-1957.

Year		Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	General Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births
1954	..	20.46	11.20	21.74
1955	..	19.93	11.30	20.6
1956	..	19.39	10.39	Nil
1957	..	22.90	11.25	Nil

ANNUAL RETURNS OF FOOD POISONING

NOTIFICATIONS, YEAR 1957

Food Poisoning Notifications Returned to Registrar General

1ST QTR.	2ND QTR.	3RD QTR.	4TH QTR.	TOTAL
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Outbreaks due to indentified agents			.. ..	Nil
Outbreaks of undiscovered cause			.. ..	Nil
Single Cases :				
Agent identified		.. ..	.. ..	Nil
Unknown cause		.. ..	.. ..	Nil
Total				Nil

TABLE II.

Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1957.

Notifiable Disease	Males	Females	Totals
Scarlet Fever	6	9	15
Whooping Cough	3	11	14
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	51	57	108
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	—	—	—
Dysentery	6	2	8
Smallpox	—	—	—
Acute Encephalitis	—	—	—
Enteric or Typhoid Fevers	—	—	—
Erysipelas	1	—	1
Meningococcal Infection	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—
Tuberculosis	—	—	—
Totals ..	67	79	146

TABLE III.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1957.

Age Periods	New Cases				Nett Deaths in Bellingham Rural District			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—15 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The following table classifies deaths according to their age groups :—

Age Groups				Males	Females	Totals
0— 1 ..	..	..		—	—	—
1— 9 ..	..	..		—	—	—
10—19 ..	..	..		2	—	2
20—29 ..	..	..		2	—	2
30—39 ..	..	..		—	—	—
40—49 ..	..	..		—	—	—
50—59 ..	..	..		3	2	5
60—69 ..	..	..		5	4	9
70—79 ..	..	..		10	16	26
80—89 ..	..	..		8	5	13
90—99 ..	..	..		1	2	3
				31	29	60

INFANT MORTALITY

during year ending 31st December, 1957

NIL.

ANALYSIS OF DEATHS BY CAUSES.

According to Registrar General's Classification.

Causes of Death	1956		1957	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory ..	—	—	—	—
2. Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—	—
3. Syphilitic disease	—	—	—	—
4. Diphtheria	—	—	—	—
5. Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—
6. Meningococcal infections ..	—	—	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—
8. Measles	—	—	—	—
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—	—	—
10. Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	—	—	—	1
11. Malignant Neoplasm, Lung and Bronchus	1	—	—	1
12. Malignant Neoplasm, Breast ..	—	2	—	1
13. Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus ..	—	—	—	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	6	—	3	—
15. Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	—	—	—	—
16. Diabetes	—	—	—	—
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system	5	7	7	4
18. Coronary disease, Angina ..	3	1	4	5
19. Hypertension with heart disease	2	1	—	1
20. Other heart disease	3	8	5	12
21. Other circulatory disease ..	3	—	2	—
22. Influenza	—	—	—	—
23. Pneumonia	—	1	1	2
24. Bronchitis	2	1	1	1
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	—	1	—	—
26. Ulcer of Stomach & Duodenum	1	—	1	—
27. Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	—	—	—	—
28. Nephritis and Nephrosis ..	1	1	—	—
29. Hyperplasia of Prostate ..	—	—	1	—
30. Pregnancy, Child Birth, Abortion	—	—	—	—
31. Congenital Malformations ..	—	—	—	—
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	5	—	—	1
33. Motor vehicle accidents ..	2	—	3	—
34. All other accidents	2	1	3	—
35. Suicide	—	—	—	—
36. Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—	—
	36	24	31	29
	Total 60		Total 60	

Public Health Inspector's Annual Report

FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1957

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA WATER

A mains water supply provided by the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company covers the settlement groups of Bellingham - Lanehead - Greenhaugh : Falstone : Wark and Birtley : Byrness - Rochester - Otterburn : Woodburn (East and West) - Ridsdale : Kirkwhelpington and Kirkharle.

There are other pockets of inadequately watered properties which have been the subject of active consideration, but on investigation the estimated revenue is negligible to offset against estimated capital cost. Provision of water by grant-aided schemes to remaining groups of properties would appear to have reached the financial limit in this rural area. Individual farms, badly watered, are steadily becoming less in number, being attracted by grant aid from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

Since the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Order, 1950, it is fair comment to say very good progress in the provision of this basic service has been made in this scattered area of 380 square miles. This in turn reflects in improved housing amenities and an easing of domestic drudgery.

Water Samples

Samples taken by the Local Authority, together with the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, numbered 36. Eight proved unsatisfactory, the remainder were of good quality.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Modern treatment plants operate at Bellingham, Woodburn, Wark. Birtley scheme should be finished in 1958. Disposal of sludge is by arrangement with local farmers at a nominal charge.

Private Septic Tanks

Twenty-one treatment plants have been installed.

Conversions

Some thirty-two conversions have been effected from privies to water carriage system.

HOUSING

Local Authority building : Nil. Private building : 1.

HOUSING ACT, 1949 : Improvement—Reconditioning.

Twenty-eight applications for improvement grants were approved. During the year, financial assistance to grant-aided schemes completed amounted to £5,216.

HILL FARMING AND LIVESTOCK REARING ACTS, 1946-1954.

A further eight grants were approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Regular and systematic cleansing of the main settlement groups throughout the area has been maintained.

The areas covered are :

Bellingham	Wark	Ridsdale
Reedsmouth	Stonehaugh	Great Bavington
Greenhaugh	Birtley	Little Bavington
Kirkharle	Falstone	Rochester
Kirkwhelpington	Kielder	Otterburn
Byrness	East Woodburn	West Woodburn

Number of properties serviced : 1390.

Tips. There are nine tips in the area situate at :

Birtley	Woodburn	Knowesgate
Otterburn	Falstone	Stonehaugh
Hareshaw	Kielder	Byrness

Employees : Two loader-drivers and three loaders.

Tonnage for Year : 3,000 tons.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

One operator is in the employ of the Council and methods of treatment are those approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

Treatments

Sewers: Regular and systematic treating in Bellingham, Woodburn and Wark.

Farms & Business Premises	1
Tips	8
Other properties	4
	—
Total	13
	—

FOOD

PUBLIC HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924-1954.

SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1933-1954.

There are five butchers in the area—three operate slaughter-houses and two buy carcass meat. 100% meat inspection is maintained.

Analysis of inspection is as under :

Bullocks ..	194	
Heifers	98	
Calves	1	
Pigs	288	
Sheep	780	Total : 1,361

Condemned :

Bovine	Sheep	Pigs
9 livers	1 liver	1 pr. lungs
1 pr. lungs		1 head & tongue

These statistics reveal an increase in carcass meat consumption of 32.52% on the previous year 1956.

Byelaws as to Sanitary Conditions and Management of Private Slaughterhouses were adopted on the 26th October, 1956, applicable to this Rural District.

Other foods examined and found unfit for human consumption :

117 tins of Fruit	4 tins Soup
12 tins Luncheon Meat	1 tin Salmon

FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS, 1955-56.

Some fifty-six premises in the area come within the scope of this legislation. Personal contact has been used as the foundation of co-operation rather than punitive action.

Food Premises : The following are the types of food premises in the district :

Bakeries	2
Butchers	5
Cafes	6
Clubs	4
Fried Fish	1
General Dealers (including Grocers, etc) ..	18
Public Houses	11
School Kitchens	9

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936. Section 269.

Tents, Vans and Sheds.

During the year under review, application was received from the Forestry Commission for a caravan site—Lewisburn—Border Forest Park. Local Authority and County Planning approval has been granted. The site is well laid out ; with water supply, ablutions, refuse bins, and screened by trees. Subsequent usage would indicate its increasing popularity.

SUMMARY OF WORKS EFFECTED

	By Informal Action	By Statutory Notice	Total
SANITARY CONVENIENCES—			
Privies and privy ashpits abolished ..	32	—	32
Water closets provided	34	—	34
Number of above for which grant was given (P.H.A. 1936, Sec. 47)	5	—	5
Sanitary bins provided.....	12	—	12
DRAINAGE—			
New drains constructed	67	—	67
Drains repaired or reconstructed	18	—	18
Additional gullies provided	191	—	191
Old gullies replaced	14	—	14
Scullery sinks provided	48	—	48
Scullery waste pipes repaired	7	—	7
Scullery waste pipes trapped	12	—	12
Yards repaired or reconstructed	6	—	6

INSPECTIONS AND VISITS

Housing :	
Demolition	52
Improvements and repairs	364
Verminous premises	4
Water Supply	67
Drainage	271
Factories and Workshops	28
Licensed Premises	27
Refuse Collection and Disposal	261
Rodent Control.....	19
Infectious Disease	30
Slaughterhouses	496
Shops	170
Fishmongers (van)	6
Ice Cream Samples	8
Bakeries	28

In conclusion, I would express appreciation of the understanding and support of the Council.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

S. CLOUGH

Senior Public Health Inspector.

A. ROBSON & SONS.
LONDON & NEWCASTLE.